High-Impact Teaching Designs for Effective Higher Educational Practices

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ABSTRACT

Teaching design is a concept that helps teachers to identify the learning purposes. It is not about timekeeping or scheduling class norms only rather a plan that equips learners to learn the required concepts. It is a strategy that supports teachers to maintain effective higher educational practices. This qualitative study analyzed the high-impact teaching designs that can help in the effectiveness of higher education practices. The high-impact teaching designs are Inward design (module material), Backward design (module delivery planning), and Forward design (module outcomes). The educational institutions have aligned most of the programs as per the requirements of modern corporations. This study is based on the authors’ priori interest and knowledge in the field and has offered three teaching designs related to inward design, backward design, and forward design. The readers will have exposure to the designs and learn to apply them to implement effective higher educational practices. The study organized the teaching designs and proposed the sequential flows from input (course modules), process (delivery mode), and output (program outcomes). The purpose of such proposed flows is to list the effective educational practices that can help in achieving the learning and program outcomes.

Keywords: Higher educational practices, High-impact learning, Teaching designs.

1. Introduction

The teaching profession demands tactics to make students learn the complete requirements of the module. The students can best learn through the teaching design plans of the teacher. The course modules are detailed and shared with the students but sometimes lack the actual strategies on how the learning will happen in the class. It is easy to teach theory and apply in the laboratory and then test it through formative and summative assessments. Teaching without laboratory practices for IT courses can be meaningless and teaching theories without practical activities in management class can be of no use. In both instances, the actual learning will not happen if practical activities and laboratories are not included. This emphasizes on teachers design assessments and evaluate how assessments will impact learners’ learning. It all depends on the proper inward design of lesson plans, backward design of lesson strategy, and forward design of professional impact on students’ learning. All three levels as proposed in this study can cater to the needs of the learning process that archives both learning outcomes and program outputs.

Good module information is required but planning for the class activities to achieve the learning outcomes is essential for effective educational practices. This is achieved through thorough strategies of inward, backward and forward designs. The achievement of learning outcomes through sequential submission of documents is not enough unless supported by the lesson plans of the module. The backward design strategies can help achieve the required educational practices as demanded by corporations. The concept of backward design is normally more in practice but inward design and forward designs are equally important for achieving the programme learning outcomes. The inward design is about what resources are required for learning, the backward design is about how the resources are utilized, and the forward design is related to achieving program learning outcomes. The first one is to get all required resources available, the second is about ensuring that the resources are utilized for effective learning purposes, and the third one is related to matching the best fit of program learning outcomes with the demands of the corporations. The three teaching designs are proposed and sequentially organized which can produce a facilitative
platform for the learners. First is the foundation plan, second is the delivery strategy, and third is the achievement of professional development. In other simple words, it is about interpersonal skills through proper resources, professional grooming through the delivery of the lessons, and professional development through actions of matching program learning outcomes with the whole module.

2. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FLOW OF TEACHING DESIGNS

2.1. Inward Design (Input)

An inward design is a concept of preventive control in higher education practice. Through this design, the relevant course material, resources, and course contents are aligned with corporate trends and industry needs. This is a foundation step that can lead toward sequential learning strategies. This design helps to induct the most pertinent patterns of course material that will be spread to the process and output requirements. This design is the directive step of the required items in higher educational practices.

An inward design is a basis for a teaching design plan because it sets the rhythm and a direction towards the learning throughout the term or specified duration of the course module. It is the first step to organizing the relevant resources that will be used in the course. If the teaching design is well planned, then the rest of the teaching design would be at the right level as well. This teaching design is a kind of agreement between the learners and the university. This agreement binds the teacher to maintain the standards as mentioned in the course module and ensure that the learning has happened as per the inward design strategy.

2.2. Backward Design (Process)

The backward design is the critical teaching design that demands the right delivery to achieve the goals as set in the inward design. The backward design is the process mode of keeping the course delivery intact with the inward design (input) and forward design (output). The lesson plan, lecture plan, communication plan, and practical plan of activities such as flipped class, role-playing, case studies, simulations, debates, management and union negotiation, and corporate storytelling sessions are the required steps in this teaching design. Each activity is planned with the objective in mind that will be achieved during those activities in the classes. This teaching design is the actual learning exposure that learners will experience during the sessions. This is important for the teachers to ensure that all students are on the right track. This backward design (process) will further help teachers to maintain the learning process as per the connection between inward design (input) and forward design (output).

2.3. Forward Design (Output)

This teaching design is an overview and a corrective strategy to ensure that everything was achieved as planned in the first and second teaching designs. The input (inward design) was about the course module plan, the process (backward design) was related to how the module was delivered and the output (forward design) is pertinent to the program outcome so that learners learned everything as effectively as planned. This design will help the university program leaders to ensure that students are equipped with the relevant skills, general knowledge, field of specialization, required corporate exposure, and analytical abilities that can best fit the industry. This design evaluates that learners have achieved practical experience and relevant corporate knowledge as per modern job requirements. Further, this design also ensures that employability skills are delivered to learners as per the plans of the university. This teaching design also presents the overall feedback and a commitment measurement in any of the areas that need to be improved. If the teaching designs are well structured, then the goals are easily achieved. This is an important educational practice if the first input (inward design) is well planned, then the process (backward design) is well structured to achieve the delivery goals and then finally the output (forward design) is achieved as per the plans of all course module strategies.

3. EFFECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

The effective higher educational practice is done through the sequence of inward design (input)-introduction, backward design (process)-body, and forward design (output)-conclusion of the course module. The backward design (process)-body is the most important as practical activities are planned and the connection is maintained between inward design (input)-introduction and forward design (output)-conclusion of the course module. The backward design for lesson planning can help in achieving higher educational purposes through practical activities. The practical class activities such as role-playing, flipped class exercises, discussion forums, article and poster presentations, and case studies are effective tools to achieve module goals. The purpose is to teach students to develop decision-making skills by answering the questions in the case studies. As identified by Yin (1994) that case studies as the preferred approach when how and why questions are to be answered (Yin, 1994). In the inward design (input), a well-planned course module will set the proper strategies for what is being achieved. In the backward design (process), well-structured course module delivery will ensure that learning happened as planned. In the backward design (process), varied activities are segmented and aligned for the good experience of the learners. Research shows that it sets students’ expectations of the learning experience (Bowen & Watson, 2017). The research also shows that to deliver an effective lesson, teachers should divide a student’s learning experience into different segments (Lang, 2016). In forward design (output), teachers should organize all activities and see what students have learned. Teachers should ask the students to recall their professional development in such practical activities. Teachers should combine all the ideas of group decisions and recall what they have done. This is normally done on the chunking. The research shows that chunking is beneficial in recalling the discussion. Individuals recall the entire group and then can retrieve each item from that group more easily (Gobet et al., 2001).
3.1. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 1 (Storytelling)

The backward design plans of storytelling have been considered the most effective. Researchers have found that making stories and storytelling is an invaluable learning tool (Alterio & McDrury, 2003). In Leadership and Management classes, teachers should combine stories and teach in comparative ways. For example: Sharing stories of Steve Jobs in leadership classes, mentioning the Corporate experience of Jack Welch in Management classes, or elaborating on the Management techniques of Micheal S. Dell in Organizational Theory classes.

3.2. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 2 (Inclusive Learning)

Teachers should support learning through inclusive teaching. Research shows that the underlying premises of inclusive teaching are equity and fairness (Hockings, 2010, pp. 3). This can support students’ learning requirements. Teachers should plan and create social groups, open discussion groups, and peer feedback requirements. This way students can feel more connected and socially belonging with one another as identified by Lowenthal and Snelson (2017). For making students, peers, and instructors more social acceptance, teachers can make a strategy to ask students to find a company and apply a change management model and share it with the rest of the class. Researchers have found that a student’s feelings around whether they belong “impacts their engagement, motivation, and overall retention within higher education” (Crosling et al., 2009, pp. 9–11). Through such activities, teachers should support learning by maintaining multiple means of engagement. Research shows that multiple means of engagement in UDL—Universal Design for Learning is determined by, and in turn determine, their motivation to learn (Rose et al., 2006, pp. 4).

3.3. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 3 (Timely Feedback)

The major impact of teaching and good evaluation is due to detailed feedback on students’ assessment within and out-of-class activities. Teachers should always plan both formative and summative feedback to students for their learning. As well mentioned by Irons (2008) that timely and constructive feedback is a significant factor for students to be successful in formal education (Irons, 2008). The biggest concern of how knowledge is comprehended is based on timely feedback. Teachers should assess students after giving feedback and check whether they have improved or do they need some more support. Research has shown that feedback should provide students with information they can use to improve their academic performance and enrich their learning experience (Taras, 2005). At the end of the course, teachers should provide detailed summative feedback that can evaluate students’ learning as per the goals of the course. Researchers have found that summative feedback aims to evaluate and determine a student’s performance at a given point by measuring it against and identifying students as a benchmark (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The CATS (classroom assessment techniques) are the routine activities that have helped students improve their learning continuously. Researchers have identified that such formative feedback can be used to develop and improve their learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

3.4. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 4 (A Quick Recap of the Previous Class)

Teachers should do a very quick recap of the previous class and connect it to what we’ll be talking about in today’s class. The quick recap sometimes turns out to be an instrumental tool and learners connect the previous discussion and recall the contents and feel confident to participate more in the class activities.

3.5. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 5 (Roleplay)

Teachers should design a role-play situation in some modules. They should make simple rules and group them in different categories to make them more interested. For example, teachers should pass the instructions like each group must think of any one good thing that impacts the employees and any bad thing that demotivates employees. Plan a movie scene, or a situation, play a role, and then write a moral story as other groups can learn from you. Each group will have some HR managers, some employees, some top hierarchy managers, etc. You all are free, to make or design a tie, design a cap, or a hat, from the papers, color them, and make a good seating plan as you prefer. Your group will portray a real scenario and then conclude with the moral story of your role-play. Such an activity will make students develop more practical skills.

3.6. Effective Higher Educational Practice # 6 (Mini Case Situations)

Teachers should plan mini-case situations to apply certain units of the modules. Following are some examples that can help plan the situations in the classes. The following mini situations are imaginary and are mentioned here for learning and guidance to the readers. Each mini-situation is followed by a question for application and learning.

a) Mini Case # 1. Ana is the Head of strategy at ABC Hotel company in Dubai. She is leading the company since 2008. The company is doing good in UAE and has achieved significant response from customers. The service is good, the customer database is good, the location is fine near the Dubai Mall area and the pricing is also reasonable for visitors. In 2022, the company faced the dilemma of losing customers. The company also faced financial losses. Ana managed to conduct many surveys but still did not get any clue of what is happening in the company. She has conducted so many meetings and contacted other friends to find out the reason but again could not reach any conclusion. Question: Imaging you are Ana, how you are going to regain the customers and build an image of the company?

b) Mini Case # 2. Chris is the head of the strategy of London-based ABC company. The company’s main business is Management consultancy and Leadership Development practices. He is leading the
company since 2010. The company is doing good in the UK but not good in the decentralized center in Tokyo. Chris has assigned Ralph to transfer to a new location and build a good customer base and attain better business opportunities. Ralph is a senior employee and has already implemented some changing reforms in many centers. He will have 15 employees in the Tokyo office. Ralph will replace Alex who worked there for a couple of years. Ralph reached Tokyo on 2nd February 2022. Ralph faced a dilemma of not getting due cooperation from employees for the last two weeks. Ralph has set a change plan and would like to apply change management processes. Questions: If you were Ralph, how will you initiate the change management process and why?

4. Teaching Design Trends in Top Institutions

A teaching plan has been considered an important tool that can ensure the desired delivery to the learners. The quality assurance managers have been in debate in formulating academic yardsticks but still did not conclude the final scientific method that ensures hundred percent learning. The top universities in the world are not the top because they are in the West but because of their teaching plans and focus on systematic learning. MIT’s technological learning platform and Harvard’s holistic case methods are aligned with proper teaching designs for many decades. The alignment from input (inward design), process (backward design) and output (forward design) are well established in the top universities. MIT’s inward design (the course material plan), its backward design (the delivery mode plans) and its forward design (program learning outcomes) are proven methods that are aligned with corporate decision-making skills.

5. Research Methodology Note

This is a pure qualitative research article to explain steps to make the readers understand the proposed teaching designs. To explain the ideas that are based on the viewpoints and an author’s prior experience, the author adopted the descriptive research article approach in this study. The effective teaching strategies prompted the researcher to contribute to the teaching designs for effective higher educational practices. There are various teaching methods but the sequential flows of this study have presented effective methods to achieve the course learning outcomes and program learning goals. This research article has covered the teaching strategies for teaching design as required for effective higher educational practices. There is still room opened to explore further research on such strategies. One of the potential further research can be on online teaching design in the coming years.

6. Conclusion

Teaching designs are the plans to achieve the highest results in academic performance. This research is a guidance note for teachers, quality assurance managers, policymakers, and academic researchers. This research article concludes that teaching designs are recommended to be planned and implemented in the sequential manners as proposed in this study. This research explored the holistic approach of the proposed teaching designs which means that much focus should be given to the preventive input design strategy (inward design) to avoid any further problems during the process design strategy (backward design). The backward design must carefully be planned as this is the main tool for achieving the right output (forward design) goals. The final concluding sentence is that the teaching designs are the tactical teaching strategies that can help in achieving the course learning outcomes and program learning goals if they are well planned from input (inward design) to process (backward design) and then towards output (forward design) levels.

References

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